

Red River

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS

Refuge Facts

- Red River National Wildlife Refuge Act - signed into law 10/13/01. According to legislation, refuge shall consist of approximately 54,000 acres of Federal lands and waters along that section of Red River between Colfax, Louisiana and Arkansas state line, a distance of approximately 120 miles.

- To guide acquisition efforts, the Service has identified four focus areas plus a proposed headquarters/visitor center site. The refuge would be a complex of four separate refuges with a headquarters/visitor center near Shreveport/ Bossier City. The focus areas include:

Lower Cane River
(Natchitoches Parish)

Spanish Lake Lowlands
(Natchitoches Parish)

Bayou Pierre Floodplain
(Desoto and Red River Parishes)

Headquarters Site
(Bossier Parish)

Wardview
(Caddo and Bossier Parishes)

Natural History

- Historically, the Red River Valley was forested with bottomland hardwoods, cypress sloughs, and shrub swamps, however, for the last three decades, the Red River Valley was utilized extensively for agricultural production.
- After completion of the Red River Waterway Project in 1994, water levels in the river are higher and more constant which have greatly reduced the turbidity. Water quality has improved and with the seasonal retention of water levels, a rich diversity of aquatic plants have developed.

- Increased water levels on the river also improved some adjacent habitats. Flooded timber and farm fields with wet, depressional areas are now common. USDA programs such as the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are restoring valuable wildlife habitats through the reforestation of prior converted wetlands and highly erodible lands in the Red River Valley.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- D'Arbonne, Handy Brake, Red River, Upper Ouachita, Black Bayou NWR's and Louisiana Wetlands Management District are administered under the North Louisiana Refuges Complex with a total budget for FY02 of \$883,700.

Refuge Objectives

- Provide for restoration and conservation of native plants and animal communities on suitable sites in the Red River Valley, including restoration of extirpated species.
- Provide habitat for migratory birds.
- Provide technical assistance to private landowners in the restoration of their lands for the benefit of fish and wildlife.

Management Tools

- Reforestation of bottomland hardwoods.
- Water management for waterfowl and other wetland species.
- Law enforcement.
- Hunting.
- Partnerships.

Red River National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use Opportunities

- Education/interpretation.
- Hunting and fishing.
- Wildlife observation.
- Photography.

Calendar of events:

December 2001: Release of draft environmental assessment "Proposed Establishment of Red River NWR" for public review and comment.

Questions and Answers

When will Red River NWR be established?

When sufficient property has been acquired by the Service within the proposed boundaries to constitute an area that can be efficiently managed as a national wildlife refuge, then the establishment of Red River NWR will take effect.

Have any funds been appropriated for land acquisition at Red River NWR?

Congress has made \$1,000,000 available for this purpose in the FY 2002 budget. In addition, the Service is proposing to spend an additional \$1,000,000 of Migratory Bird Conservation Funds for land acquisition at the refuge in FY 2002.